

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV BF
SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER LISTS UNEMPLOYMENT AS NO. 1 PROBLEM
FACING THE BAHAMAS

1. IN A TAPED INTERVIEW AIRED ON BAHAMAS RADIO JANUARY 13, PRIME MINISTER PINDLING LISTED "THE NAGGING PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT" AS THE NO. 1 PROBLEM WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT MUST COMBAT IN 1978. SECOND ON HIS LIST OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES IS HOUSING AND IMPROVEMENT AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT RANKS THIRD. SPECIFIC MEASURES TO COMBAT UNEMPLOYMENT WERE LACKING IN THE ADDRESS - AS THEY WERE IN LAST SUMMER'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND SPEECH FROM THE THRONE OUTLINING THE PLP PROGRAMS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS - ALTHOUGH THE PRIME MINISTER FOUND ENCOURAGEMENT IN WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS AN UPTURN IN THE WINTER TOURIST SEASON.

2. THE PM HAD SOME HARSH - AND IN OUR OPINION JUSTIFIED - CRITICISM OF THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION (BDP) STATING THAT "THERE IS A GOOD DEAL MORE RESEARCH... THEY CAN DO AND THEY CAN GENERATE A GOOD DEAL MORE POSITIVE CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AND POSTURES." HE ADDED THAT "...WITHOUT A SHARP PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION I AND MY COLLEAGUES ARE LIKELY TO GET CARELESS AND WE WOULD MAKE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MORE MISTAKES THAN WE MIGHT ORDINARILY." HE CONTINUED BY REFERRING TO THE MINISCULE MARXIST VANGUARD PARTY WHICH HE TERMED "A TOTALITARIAN PARTY FAR TO THE LEFT" AS BEING MORE EFFECTIVE "IN KEEPING THE PLP ON ITS TOES" THAN THE BDP.

3. COMMENT: THE PRIME MINISTER'S RECOGNITION OF THE

UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM - WHICH WAS CONSIDERABLY DOWNPLAYED
BY HIM DURING LAST SUMMER'S ELECTION WAS NEVERTHELESS
NOTHING NEW. NEITHER WAS HIS FAILURE TO SPELL OUT WHAT
HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT INTEND TO DO. THERE IS NO DOUBT,
HOWEVER, THAT HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT PLP DISCIPLINE,
EFFECTIVENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.
HE WAS SAID NOT TO HAVE BEEN ELATED OVER HIS PARTY'S
LOPSIDED VICTORY IN JULY AND THE THEM OF "STAYING IN TOUCH
WITH THE GRASS ROOTS" WAS DOMINANT AT THE PLP PARTY
CONVENTION IN OCTOBER. DESPITE THE VANGUARD PARTY'S
SMALL NUMBER OF ADHERENTS THEY DO SPEAK OUT ON THE ISSUES
AND THE LOCAL PRESS - FOR WHATEVER REASONS - SEEMS EAGER
TO PRINT WHATEVER THEY SAY AND OFTEN, WHAT THEY SAY,
DESPITE THE MARXIST JARGON, IS GENERALLY MORE RELEVANT
THAN THE BDP'S EXAGGERATED AND THUS UNCONVINCING RHETORIC
OR THE SILENCE OF THE MORIBUND F.N.M. AS A RESULT
THE PRIME MINISTER IS PROBABLY CORRECT IN SAYING THAT
THE VANGUARDS ARE ONE OF THE FEW ENTITIES IN THE
BAHAMAS WHICH ARE SPEAKING OUT ON PLP INDIFFERENCE
OR INDECISIVENESS.
SCHWARTZ

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